

Warren Commission Counsel at VU

JFK Probe by FBI Tip of

By PAT WELCH

If the FBI would destroy evidence in a case of the magnitude of President Kennedy's assassination, what have they done in lesser cases, former Warren Commission assistant counsel David Belin said Wednesday.

In a debate at Vanderbilt University with Warren Report critic Harold Weisburg, Belin remarked, "I guess I was a man ahead of my time. I didn't trust the FBI in 1964." He explained the commission staff had hired its own experts to double check the investigation.

BELIN, WHO was also executive director of the Rockefeller Commission, investigating the CIA, said he has never found any evidence that the CIA — or anyone other than Lee Harvey Oswald — had anything to do with killing Kennedy. But the disclosure that the FBI destroyed a note Oswald wrote before the Nov. 22, 1963, sniper slaying concerns him.

"If the FBI is going to destroy evidence in the case of the murder of a president, after an executive order has gone out to all agencies preserving evidence, when will they not destroy evidence? When it suits them?" he asked. "The ramifications are very, very chilling."

Weisburg, a one time champion chicken farmer from Fredricksburg, Md., student of the assassination and publisher at his own expense of seven books on it, challenged Belin on several aspects of the investigation in their first public confrontation.

WEISBURG CALLED for a reopening of the investigation by Congress, charging the FBI had "crippled" the

Iceberg?

Warren Commission.

Belin did not oppose a new investigation but said "reopening the investigation would confirm" his conclusion that Oswald was the sole assassin.

While separating Weisburg from other critics who insist the President's murder was part of a conspiracy, Belin insisted Weisburg had not come up with "one bit of evidence ... another gun ... another bullet."

"I HAVE never undertaken to try to solve the assassination of John F. Kennedy," Weisburg replied. He said his role is "making a record for history."

"It is not incumbent on anybody who says the government did not tell us the truth about the death of our President" to find out who did, Weisburg argued.

New interest in the assassination was shown by the

packed house of Vanderbilt students asking pointed questions of Belin and Weisburg. Many of the students were in the first grade when Kennedy was killed in Dallas, Tex.

BOTH BELIN and Weisburg said in interviews earlier they believe the Watergate saga has launched the current re-examination on college campuses. Weisburg also blamed the Vietnam war for helping undermine the government credibility.

Their on-stage appearance was marked by frequent clashes, over such issues as the time sequence of Oswald's movements after allegedly firing from the Texas School Book Depository Building and what the autopsy photographs of Kennedy would show.

Belin said he believes the pictures should be released publicly, blaming Warren for the decision to delete the pictures from the case's evidence.

"I SAW WHAT are probably the most horrifying pictures I have ever seen in my life," he said. He explained part of the President's head is missing, torn away by the high speed bullet which shattered his brain.

He said the photographs,

Return to the

made at Bethesda Naval Hospital, were "originally government property," but were kept private to spare the sensibilities of the Kennedy family. "There is a tendency to treat top government officials as royalty," Belin noted.

Weisburg, on the other hand, said all medical records are generally treated as confidential. "It is really unfair to make the Kennedy family the villains," he said, adding that he was "not a Kennedy fan."

BELIN, WEISBURG pointed out, had been active in the Lawyers for Nixon organization, not saying in which election.

"I frankly was suspicious when I first went to Washington," Belin said. He said he started his work, as one of two attorneys studying the area called "identification of the assassin," believing in a conspiracy, because he was suspicious that Jack Ruby

had killed Oswald before he could be tried.

He said it was his deduction, from the evidence provided by then-Texas Gov. John Connally's doctors, that a single bullet killed Kennedy and wounded Connally—the only explanation that fits the evidence of the Zapruder film. Weisburg sneered at this as the "super bullet," or "magic bullet" theory. He said he had recently been able to get evidence, after suing the government under new amendments to the Freedom of Information Act, which showed two tests, in addition to the FBI ballistics tests, could not connect recovered bullets with Oswald's rifle.

BELIN COUNTERED, "If you don't believe Oswald killed Tippitt (Dallas police officer J. D. Tippitt), you won't believe Oswald killed President Kennedy." He said there are six eyewitnesses who saw Oswald after that murder, and evidence links him with the pistol used in that slaying and the car-

tridges he was seen discarding in the bushes.

One thing that should have been done in 1964, Belin said, was to administer a lie detector test to Marina Oswald. He said he was successful in getting a lie detector test for Jack Ruby—by urging Ruby's lawyers to ask for it—which proved Ruby was telling the truth.

He said he does not believe in the psychological stress evaluator, which tests voice patterns, and which indicated that Oswald told the truth when he denied killing Kennedy. Oswald lied to police about other things, he noted.

Belin urged his audience to read the entire Warren Commission Report and all 26 volumes of appendices which contain the evidence, as well as Weisburg's books, *Whitewash* and *Post Mortem*, and his own, Nov. 22, 1963: *You Are the Jury*. Proceeds of Belin's book go to charity, he said, as he does

not want to make money off the investigation.

When he asked the 500 persons present how many had read the complete set, only three stood up. One was CIA expert and Vanderbilt professor Harry Howe Ransom.

Weisburg also urged people to read the report. "It is not possible to read the report and the 26 appendices and believe it," he concluded.